

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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February 1, 1971

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS
APPLY

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE FILES

SUBJECT: Vietnam Ad Hoc Working Group Meeting,
January 26, 1971

State Dept. review completed

USAID, JCS, OSD reviews completed

Because of other commitments Ambassador Sullivan did not attend, and Mr. Engle presided over the brief meeting.

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Engle first announced that CBS News planned to do a TV story on the fact that two previously released U.S. POW's were now conducting flight training, and that this was a violation of the Geneva Convention. General Karhohs remarked that CBS seemed to be getting desperate for some critical news on Vietnam. Engle then noted GVN Foreign Minister Lam's announcement on a new POW release. The text of Lam's statement was not yet available, but the proposal had been worked out with the U.S. in advance.

The return of the 37 NVA POW's to North Vietnam on January 24 was then discussed briefly. There was some confusion in the initial field reporting on the release; one report stated that the press did not accompany the group to the DMZ, but it was clear from pictures and reports in both U.S. newspapers and on television that press coverage was fairly extensive.

Engle then raised the Ad Hoc group's draft report on measures to improve the GVN's administrative performance. He said that the paper had now been coordinated except for one point on which State and CIA disagreed. State recommended that the four regional Phoenix advisors be CIA officers; CIA preferred that these advisors should continue to be colonels. Other members of the group took a neutral position on this point, and Engle said that the paper would be forwarded to Dr. Kissinger with a split position on this issue.

Mr. Kirk remarked that Ambassador Bunker would be arriving in Washington on February 1, primarily to discuss the South Vietnamese political situation. Kirk announced that Bunker is scheduled to see Secretary Laird and DCI Helms on February 4. He noted that there

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were as yet no appointments for Ambassador Bunker with either the President or Dr. Kissinger.

Mr. Doolin announced that Secretary Laird has begun to push hard for a broad appraisal of our position on the presence of third country troops in Vietnam. In particular, Doolin said, Laird would like to see the South Koreans withdrawn as soon as possible. He feels that the U.S. negotiated a very poor financial bargain in arranging for Korean troops to come to Vietnam originally. Engle asked if the Korean troops did not provide needed military strength in central Vietnam, and Karhohs replied that this would be one of the questions taken up in the appraisal.

Mr. Engle then alluded to a [] message which reported that three white women and a boy were running loose in the Cambodian jungle. A discussion of their identity then ensued, and the most likely conclusion was that they were French plantation people. Engle, however, asked Carver to check into it further.

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Arthur announced that AID had decided to authorize CIP funding for the GVN's new power plant. There was somewhat of a problem on the funding of this project with CIP funds, Arthur explained. But AID had decided to go ahead because of the piaster absorbing effect which the CIP funds would have in this case. Arthur noted, however, that AID's decision to supply CIP funds for an essentially government project was experimental, and that the decision would not be considered as having set a precedent.

Karhohs said that Sir Robert Thompson would see Mr. Nutter on January 29 before leaving for Vietnam. He said that DOD intended to stress the fact publicly that the GVN rather than the U.S. had requested Sir Robert's police survey. Arthur remarked that AID hoped to ask Sir Robert informally to discuss his report with U.S. officials in Saigon before presenting it to the GVN. By so doing, Arthur said, AID could assess the potential financial costs involved in any of Sir Robert's recommendations before they were passed on to the GVN, and perhaps modify particularly costly items.

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